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Body, Image and Affect in Consumer Culture

MIKE FEATHERSTONE

Abstract This article is concerned with the relationship between body, image and affect within consumer culture. Body image is generally understood as a mental image of the body as it appears to others. It is often assumed in consumer culture that people attend to their body image in an instrumental manner, as status and social acceptability depend on how a person looks. This view is based on popular physiognomic assumptions that the body, especially the face, is a reflection of the self: that a person's inner character or personality will shine through the outer appearance. The modification and cosmetic enhancement of the body through a range of regimes and technologies can be used to construct a beautiful appearance and thereby a beautiful self. The article begins by examining body images in consumer culture and their relation to photography and moving images. This is followed by an examination of the consumer culture transformative process through a discussion of cosmetic surgery. The article then questions the over-simplistic logic that assumes that transformative techniques will automatically result in a more positive and acceptable body image. The new body and face may encourage people to look at the transformed person in a new way. But the moving body, the body without image, which communicates through proprioceptive senses and intensities of affect, can override the perception of the transformed appearance. A discussion of the affective body follows, via a closer examination of the body without image, the opening of the body to greater affect and indeterminacy. The affective body image and its potential greater visibility through new media technologies are then discussed through some examples taken from digital video art. The article concludes by examining some of the implications of these shifts within consumer culture and new media technologies.

Keywords affect, body image, body without image, consumer culture, cosmetic surgery, digital video art, Mark Hansen, mask of ageing, Brian Massumi

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This article is concerned with the relationship between body, image and affect within consumer culture.¹ Body image is generally understood as a mental image of one's body as it appears to others, a concept originating with Paul Schilder. There are many definitions of body image and it has been argued that the structure and nature of body images can shift over historical time and varies between cultures. Ferguson (1997a, 1997b), for example, argues that there has been a shift from a relatively well-defined, singular and closed body image in the 19th century (the classical bourgeois ego) to a more open and ambiguous sense of body image, more of a shifting surface on which traces are recorded, found today. Addressing this current sense of greater ambiguity in body image is one of the aims of this article. Although it should be noted that there is no intention here to assume there has been a shift in historical or epochal terms, or to understand the process in terms of master-logics, be they located in late capitalism, late modernity, post-modernity or whatever.² If there is an 'affect turn', it has to be conceived primarily as stimulated by theoretical work, drawing on recent innovations in biology and neuroscience, rather than through the move to a new affect society, or affective phase of consumer culture. This is not to dismiss the impact of technological changes on making affect visible: as we shall see below, certain innovations in new media technologies, and their take-up in art practices, have created new possibilities for the visualization of affect, with important implications for knowledge formation.³

The more ambiguous sense of body image, then, points to a related concept, body schema, which has more to do with the felt body, the body's sensory-motor capacities that function in a haptic manner. It can be related to the loss of the sense of bodily integrity an injured person, such as an amputee, suffers when experiencing a phantom limb (Slatman and Widdershoven, forthcoming; Weiss, 1999). The disturbance of habitual body schemas can be related to the loss of the habitual body, the taken-for-granted habitus Bourdieu (1977) speaks of, which has been the subject of a good deal of commentary (Inoue, 2006; McNay, 1999).

For our current purposes, then, it is the unpacking of the relationship between body and image and the modes of conceptualization and experiencing of the body image which is of interest. Body image may be conceived in terms of a more visual sense of the image others have of oneself, based upon a person's appearance: the 'look' one has for others. This can be referred to as 'mirror-image', in which the body's visual appearance is central (cf. Massumi's [2002] notion of mirror-vision, or Cooley's [1902] earlier notion of 'looking-glass self'). In the absence of the mirror, the recording of the face and body by the camera through photography becomes the dominant mode for representing the body image, and also of imagining one's body image. Yet there is a further dimension of body image suggested

by the term 'body schema', that is, the non-visual sense of the body, the haptic and proprioceptive feelings from the body – not just on the senses of hearing, smell and taste, but also touch and sense of inner body movement. This also points to the importance of synaesthesia, of the way the senses work together to produce not only our perception of the world, but the way we sense other bodies when we encounter them in everyday life, or through various media (Freund, 2009; Jung, 2009). Indeed, it has been argued that we do not see a movie or television in a purely visual or ocularcentric way, but we relate to visual media in a manner involving other senses (Marks, 2000, 2002).⁴ If our seeing/experience relies on the work of the eye, it is more the 'tactile eye' Taussig (1991) refers to. The senses involved in movement can be seen as closely related to affect. Other bodies and the images of other bodies in the media and consumer culture may literally move us, make us feel moved, by affecting our bodies in inchoate ways that cannot easily be articulated or assimilated to conceptual thought. Here we think of the shiver down the spine or the gut feeling. Affect points to the experience of intensities, to the way in which media images are felt through bodies. This applies especially to bodies in motion, or imbued with the possibility of movement, as opposed to the type of ocular narcissistic identification we get with the mirror-image of a static unified body-and-face.

The introduction of affect, or as Massumi (2002) refers to it, the body without image, the body which experiences or gives off intensities which refuse to cohere into a distinctive image, complicates the assumptions about body image in consumer culture. It is often assumed in consumer culture that people should attend to their body image in an instrumental manner, as status and social acceptability depend on how a person looks. This view is based on popular physiognomic assumptions that the body, especially the face, is a reflection of the self: that a person's inner character or personality will shine through the outer appearance (see Rivers, 1994; Twine, 2002). In its most extreme form it links beauty with moral goodness. The corollary in consumer culture is that the modification and cosmetic enhancement of the body, through a range of regimes and technologies, can be used to construct a beautiful appearance and thereby a beautiful self. Given that such regimes are open to those willing to invest their money or effort, it is argued that potential of beauty, or beautification, is brought within the orbit of ordinary women and men.

Indeed the consumer culture publicity presents it as an imperative, a duty, and casts those who become fat, or let their appearance go, or look old before their time, as not only slothful but as having a flawed self. On the other hand, it is assumed that people with an enhanced appearance will be able to enjoy a body and face which are more congruent with their 'true' selves. Body work will also

transform the self, upgrading it to a newer level replete with positive possibilities, in line with the new body. It is assumed, then, that consumer culture transformational techniques, such as cosmetic surgery, will result in a renewed body and self, better able to move through interpersonal spaces and more able to enjoy the full range of lifestyle opportunities and pleasures on offer. Yet, as we have already noted, the relationship between body image and self-image may not work in such a simple way as the visual rationality of mirror-vision implies. The body image that is conceived in the manner of a before-and-after photograph ignores the affective image. The affective body points to unseen and unnoticed aspects of interpersonal interactions, which are more difficult to conceptualize and articulate; but this does not mean that people are unaware of their force.

Stylists and groomers readily emphasize that it is not just the clothes you wear, but the way you wear them. In effect they seek to teach people not just how to reform the body and face, 'the look', but also to reform the way they walk or stand, hold their head and hands, and so on. The implication is that the transformation demands not just the reforming of the body surface and volume through fitness regimes and cosmetic surgery, but a complete transformation also requires something akin to a course in method acting, to learn to play the part of the new person one has elected to become. To have a body and face that has the capacity to stop people in their tracks and make them take a second look, to make them want to verify, note and even record the persona which has instigated the shock of beauty. This is a body whose movement and sensory range communicates a positive affective charge. This power to affect others through body rhetoric, the accumulation of affective force and potential in the body are, as has oft been noted, central characteristics of charisma. While the body without image, the affective body can be represented as an opposite to the body image in the visual 'mirror-image' mode, the distant goal of the consumer culture transformative process is to bring both together – the power to affect others, through the beautification process and the enhancement of 'the look' coupled with an appropriate body style of presentation. The ultimate power to change lives, not just to look and be looked at, but a body in movement, an affective body which is noticed and commands respect; a body which has the power to affect others; which possesses social force in the urban milieu and the spaces of sociability. This is the self-improvement road which leads to not just bodily and self-transformation, but style and lifestyle transformation too.

The article begins by examining body images in consumer culture and their relation to photography and moving images. It then examines the consumer culture transformative process through a discussion of cosmetic surgery. A discussion of the affective body follows, via a closer examination of the body without image,

the opening of the body to greater indeterminacy. The affective body image and its potential greater visibility through new media technologies are then discussed through some examples taken from digital video art. The article concludes by examining some of the implications of these shifts within consumer culture and new media technologies.

Consumer Culture Body Images

It has become a commonplace that consumer culture is obsessed with the body. There is a preoccupation in the media with images of beautiful bodies, the stars, celebrities and models who exemplify the good life. They are invariably presented as relaxed, smiling and full of youthful energy, surrounded by the latest consumer goods in luxurious settings, enjoying another memorable 'experience'. Such images of the carefree life, of bodily pleasures and excesses, of narcissistic grooming and pampering, are not without their critics, who point out that the consumer culture good life is shallow, socially divisive and bereft of human values. The preoccupation with 'the look', appearance and image is seen as a superficial diversion from the important questions of social and planetary justice, equality and reconstruction which continue to accumulate. There is often the sense that images are dangerous and seductive, especially the concern with body image. Yet, we know relatively little about how images work.

The relationship between images, advertising and desire with the rise of consumer culture and the persuasive force of early photography in the 19th century (the chromolithograph images reproduced in magazines, handbills, packaging, etc., which bring the distant things to hand has been well noted; see e.g. Ewen and Ewen, 1982). Images are often used to summon up and crystallize utopian and exotic desires. Images invite comparisons: reinforcing who we are not and who we would like to be. Comparisons, which the consumer culture, body maintenance, cosmetic, fashion and advice industries are able to work on, with their photographic images of the beautiful people enjoying the good life. One of the central themes of consumer culture is transformation: the 'before-and-after' images, in which the new image is presented as 'proof' of the value of the time, money and energy expended. This suggests that a new body image is seen as the key to a new positive self-image, exciting lifestyle and better quality of life.

Yet while consumer culture publicity invites us to take a long hard look at our appearance and employ instrumentally rational regimes to start on the road to self-improvement, it is clear that images do complex work. In consumer culture they often provide a representation of the body as presented for others via the photographic camera: an acceptable still façade of the face and body: *the portrait*.

Yet, this photographic image is difficult to separate from the image, in the sense of *imago*, the image is related to imagination, not what is 'there', but what one imagines one should be and strives to construct.⁵ This can be conveyed via a person's body image, stance, or assemblage of facial expressions, held in 'the mind's eye': a model of what one should or could be. Clothing, make-up and adornment are important here. They are not just the exterior signs, the constructed appearance of what one wants others to see, but also reflexively they provide an outward image which seeks confirmation in the returned glances of others, for the inner narrative of what one feels one should be. This is the made-up person, living out, or actualizing a particular temporary fiction, or moving through the life course to realize a particular larger narrative. It is evident that this applies most readily to women in contemporary Western societies, where being a woman has often been referred to as a masquerade or 'a form of theatre' (Sontag, 1978), with women constantly monitoring their performances, 'watching themselves being looked at' (Berger, 1973). Annette Kuhn captures this double aspect of make-up and the ways images are made-up for women when she remarks:

A good deal of the groomed beauty of the women in the glamour portraits comes from the fact that they are 'made-up' in the immediate sense that cosmetics have been applied to their bodies in order to enhance their existing qualities. But they are also 'made-up' in the sense that the images, rather than the women, are put together, constructed, even fabricated or falsified in the sense that we might say a story is made up if it is a fiction. (Kuhn, 1985: 13; cited in Gaines and Herzog, 1990: 1)

It may well be the case that a particular photograph is treasured by the subject or significant other, as capturing both the elegant appearance, but also 'the look' which summons up the inner narrative, the imaginary image, which propels the body work and make-up efforts. This 'posed' photographic portrait⁶ became one that circulated widely in popular culture with the rise of photography in the 19th century, and especially after the emergence of the star system around the turn of the 20th century.⁷ The Hollywood film industry and studio system, which emerged in the inter-war years, popularized the glossy film star 'still photograph' (the movie still), which, complete with a florid signature, was given away to fans or reproduced in cinema fans' or women's magazines in this period.

The still photograph to be gazed at was an image which summoned up a narrative, a prosthetic for imaginative work. Yet it was at best merely a trace of a living presence, of the embodied person. Many of the accounts of charisma and stardom point to an additional aspect to body image: *presence* (see discussion in Featherstone, 1995: chs 3 and 4). This is often described as not just a certain style, but as something more ineffable, something which you need to experience to

understand. It is something which works in a different register to beauty and the contrived 'look'. It is something you need to *feel*.⁸ It is the sense of energy, of a force, of a change of register – an *intensity*. It is an unstructured non-conscious experience transmitted between bodies, which has the capacity to create affective resonances below the threshold of articulated meaning. Indeed, these tonalities may work counter to the verbal message conveyed in conversation and be something we implicitly trust more. In contrast to the body image, the affective body is a body without a clearly defined image. It lacks articulation and is more processual. It is sensed via affect and can provide a strong intensity which it is hard to assume could be the product of deliberate artifice or dissimulation. Here we think of the 'feel good', avuncular impression conveyed by politicians such as Ronald Reagan for example, which helps to establish the feeling that they are 'trusted' leaders (see the discussions of Ronald Reagan by Massumi [2002] and George Bush Jr and Pauline Hanson by Edbauer [2004]).

The moving body and its image in the cinema, television and video, then, can be seen to work more as a movement-image, a body in process, which can convey and receive a range of affective responses, intensities which are palpable, but difficult to decipher and articulate in language – especially in the duration of lived body-time. Fortunately, the digital technologies of the new media, especially video, have the capacity to record, capture and slow down the body moving-image. They enable us to view in slow-motion the ways in which affects are communicated by the face, gestures and body movements, to observe the affect thresholds which cannot be perceived in the normal choreography of face-to-face interactions, but can be felt – e.g. the 'gut feeling'. It is this dimension of the affective body which Mark Hansen (2004b) focuses on in the work of video-artists such as Bill Viola, which will be discussed later in the article. In effect, the image has become a process, one which directly involves the body's affective apparatus, and is far from the ideas of disembodied virtual cyberspace which preoccupied many people a decade or more ago (see Featherstone and Burrows, 1995). The opening up of the body image reveals the potential creative experience for our own bodies of the encounter with new intensities and affect through the new media.

This article, then, seeks to discuss the relationship of affect and the affective body to media images. It seeks to think through the body in consumer culture by questioning the conventional sense of body image, as something fashionable and actively constructed by the range of body transformative techniques promoted. Against this can be placed the affective body without image, the more incomplete and open body, which is affected by other people's bodies in a variety of ways, which bypass the alleged 'all-seeing eye' and work beneath the level of consciousness and language. In contrast to the purposive rational instrumental

view of the body governed by the 'marketing' self (as in the image of the mind as the driver and the body as the car), the affective body is open to misreading and provides an excess of embodied information.

Cosmetic Transformations in Consumer Culture

It has become a cliché that the body is the key to all the enjoyments, the sensations, tastes and activities of consumer culture. Consumer culture presents the good life as available for purchase (Featherstone, 2007). It encourages people to assemble goods and experiences together into a meaningful, satisfying and socially approved lifestyle. Yet, the ubiquitous publicity images of happy relaxed consumers in ambient stylish environments, enjoying life, tend to conceal the expenditure of not just money, but time for 'the harried leisure class' (Linder, 1970). The consumer has to face conflicting advice provided by various experts and cultural intermediaries, as well as celebrities' endorsements of products. There is invariably a tendency towards inflation in the alleged benefits from the range of body maintenance and popular health remedies and strategies. The consumer is presented as able to make a rational choice and calculate efficacy. Improving the working of the inner body to maximize health is presented as leading to greater energy and vitality, with the added bonus of a more pleasing reshaping and toning of the outer body appearance. The positive benefits of bodily transformative work are endlessly extolled.

Transformation is not only central to consumer culture, it is one of the key tenets of Western modernity. Nowhere has this been more effectively endorsed as a cultural ideal than in the United States. 'Rags to riches' stories and testimonies of self-made men abound, to reinforce the image of the United States as *the* land of opportunity. Here we think of the exemplary life histories of Dale Carnegie, Horatio Alger, et al.⁹ The self-help tradition, with its popular texts, has a long history not only in Anglo-Saxon cultures, but also in religious traditions in many parts of the world (see Butler-Bowden, 2003). In the Western tradition, notions of transformation can be traced back to early Christianity. Particularly influential has been the notion of *calling* which Max Weber addressed in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Inner transformation in the 'fashioning of one's life to serve God', to follow one's appropriate calling in the world, became extended to other spheres of activity outside work, the *lebensordnungen*, or 'life orders', referred to by Weber (1948; see also Featherstone, 1995: chs 3 and 4). Art, the erotic life and even an aestheticized life, in which the aim was to transform one's life into a work of art, became seen as appropriate ways of ordering one's life (see Featherstone, 2007: ch. 5). The Italian Renaissance gave an important

impetus towards the notion of 'the artist as hero', but also important was the Romantic Movement and subsequently the life of certain figures such as Goethe (see Bleicher, 2007) and Wagner. Dandyism, with Beau Brummell, Baudelaire and later Oscar Wilde and des Esseintes at the end of the 19th century, was important in the aestheticization and stylization of life, and the development of an 'ethics of aesthetics' (Maffesoli, 1991). Baudelaire, in particular, was taken up by Michel Foucault (1991) in his influential discussion of the modern and *modernité*, with 'self-invention' an important theme. For Foucault, the emphasis shifts from authenticity and consistency in the overall structuring of one's life, to invention and discontinuity in the quest for new experiences and ways to live (Revel, 2009). Indeed, it is suggested that we find this in Foucault's own cultivation of a series of compartmentalized separate enclaved lives, a life of episodes, adventures and secrets from one who proclaimed that he 'writes in order to have no face' (Macey, 1993).

The focus on transformation and the life lived in pursuit of new experiences, sensations and stylized appearance became influential in the expanding consumer culture of the 20th century. New popular heroes, the Hollywood stars and celebrities in the media and entertainment industries, along with sportsmen and women, began to stand alongside and replace the 19th-century emphasis upon businessmen, military leaders, scientists, explorers, artists and intellectuals. Indeed, consumer culture has long been preoccupied with the 'outgoing' values of 'personality' (a charming and engaging appearance), in contrast to 'character' (the virtues of consistency and steadfastness) (see Featherstone, 1982, 2007). The entertainment, sport and culture industries bring together sport stars, fashion models, chefs and politicians who need to learn celebrity style ways of speaking, story-telling, disclosure and presentation (Rojek, 2001; Smart, 2005). In addition, 'ordinary people' are given the latitude to cultivate 'fascinating lives', to present to the media audiences in reality television shows, and in some cases actually become celebrities to boot (Turner, 2009).

There is a constant fascination in the media with celebrities' lifestyles through 'kiss and tell stories', revelations of the 'secrets of the stars' and confessions (Redmond, 2008). The expansion of television channels with satellite and cable television, along with the Internet with its multitude of home pages, links and blogs, has added a range of new outlets to be placed alongside existing newspaper and magazine feature articles. Stars and celebrities are constantly scrutinized and quizzed on how they maintain their energy, bodily fitness, good looks and appearance, while coping with challenging work schedules and the social whirl. Each fall from grace to deal with weight problems, alcoholism, drugs, or just the ravages of the celebrity lifestyle, is often followed by a period spent in a health farm,

clinic or retreat. Body maintenance, diet and fitness regimes, or the latest therapy expert or guru, are at hand to put them back on the road to self-improvement. If a star or celebrity should bump down to earth and fall down the league table, the bodily dimension of the failure is often given prominence, with paparazzi photographs and video-clips required to illustrate the demise. Then there is always the 'come-back', the potential to re-mobilize the public and re-animate media interest through heroic body work: the overweight stars that 'start-over' with gruelling fitness routines with personal trainers, or who run a sponsored marathon, or walk to the North Pole, etc. A life which constantly swings between successes and failures, between a beautiful healthy body and an abandoned ill-disciplined body that bears the marks of constant excesses, has a strong media human-interest angle. The transformation of appearance becomes seen as an increasingly acceptable and even worthy pursuit by the media and public, not only for stars and celebrities, but for ordinary people too, who are asked to follow the 'makeover culture' (see Fraser, 2007; McCracken, 2008; McGee, 2005). The 'look good: feel good' transformational logic of consumer culture is presented as within the reach of all.¹⁰

The cultivation of appearance has a strong gender dimension, with greater scrutiny given to women's bodies. Even with the circulation of a broader more varied range of active images of what it means to be a woman today, there are still gender differentials. It is frequently asserted that the youth, fitness and beauty media imagery make the vast majority of women feel unhappy with their bodies, as Bordo (2003) has indicated. Yet it has also been argued that men are increasingly drawn into the consumer culture body image game and are becoming more critical and vulnerable about their bodies (Atkinson, 2008; Bordo, 1999). For men the ideal is often a muscular body, not necessarily a slim body. But for certain groups, especially those who read 'lads' or young men's magazines, anxiety about their body image coupled with excessive work-outs in the gym can apparently lead to a new condition, dubbed '*athletica nervosa*' (Giles and Close, 2008).¹¹ The media, then, are often castigated for putting out inappropriate and unattainable images for women and men (Wykes and Gunther, 2004).

One of the most dramatic techniques for body reconstruction is cosmetic surgery, which has become legitimated as a popular form of self-improvement in recent years (Bordo, 2003; Covino, 2004; Doyle, 2008; Gimlin, 2007; Heyes, 2007; Jones, 2008a).¹² The success of cosmetic surgery has been built on the popularization of the beauty ideal within consumer culture through the fascination with stars and celebrities, which can be traced back to the 'Hollywood Ideal', endorsed by movie and women's magazines, the tabloid press and more recently television (see Blum, 2005, 2007; Featherstone, 1982; Hepworth and Featherstone, 1982).

Increasingly, ordinary people are shown not only how to dress, or make-up and style their hair, like the stars, but how they can actually have a face more like their heroines through relatively cheap, readily available cosmetic surgery.

A significant turning point in the process has been the growth of reality television, with *Extreme Makeover* the first programme to focus on the process of transformation of ordinary-looking people to more glamorous counterparts. Since 2002, when the programme was first broadcast, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery reported a 44 percent increase in the total number of cosmetic procedures (Blum, 2007: 34). Through such programmes cosmetic surgery became presented as a realistic option for more women, in the sense that they could not only observe the 'before-and-after' effects, but also watch ordinary women like themselves go through the process in full detail. In short, cosmetic surgery became seen as not only for the rich and famous, but something affordable and do-able for ordinary women. Reality television, then, offers ample opportunities to watch programmes in which ordinary people become turned into celebrities.¹³

In the United States successful programmes include ABC's *Extreme Makeover* (2002), FX's *Nip and Tuck* (2003), Fox's *The Swan* (2004), MTV's *I Want a Famous Face* (2004). In the UK programmes include: Channel 4's *Ten Years Younger* and Channel 5's *Brand New You*. *Extreme Makeover* has been one of the most successful, with its search for candidates eager for a 'Cinderella-like life-changing experience', who believe that changing their looks means a change in their lives and destinies. A similar makeover transformation programme in the UK produced by Channel Four, *Ten Years Younger*, has recently completed its sixth series. It centres on a middle-aged woman participant who looks a lot older than her chronological age. The candidate is first made to endure the public's estimate of her age and cruel comments on how she looks, then she is transformed by a team of experts via facelifts, botox, brow lift, rhinoplasty, dental implants, hair restyling and colouring, specialist make-up, fitness regime with a personal trainer, clothing advice from a stylist. Each stage is monitored and frank verdicts delivered by the experts, with the public brought back at the end to estimate the candidate's age again. The programme is also interesting in the way the advertisement break in the middle of the programme regularly features cosmetic surgery advertisements and the other commercial spin-offs to offer a similar transformation to the public who can afford to pay for it.¹⁴

Cosmetic surgery appears to solve the body image problem of the ageing process, with its invocation of endless remodelling and erasure. For some this may offer a solution to 'the mask of ageing', which occurs as the older wrinkled face is seen as no longer able to express the inner self and people experience the

discrepancy of a young self locked within an old face and body (Featherstone and Hepworth, 1991). Cosmetic surgery and associated techniques promise to repair the process, by restoring a more youthful face, hence allowing greater congruence and expressive potential for the inner 'ageless self'. An interesting development here is the increasing use of Botox (a diluted form of the neurotoxin botulinum toxin), currently the most popular cosmetic treatment in the United States and now a billion-dollar industry (Cooke, 2008: 25).¹⁵ Botox is marketed as an anti-ageing technique to 'clear' wrinkles. It does so by blocking the nerve impulses that control muscle movement and therefore restricting the ability to contract facial muscles. The problem with Botox is that it makes it impossible for the face to form certain expressions and so limits the capacity to emote.¹⁶ It impairs the recording of the reactions to everyday events on the face, which normally leads to an accumulation of patterned muscular responses, which eventually mark the face with lines and wrinkles. Botox not only limits the potential for *expression*, but also the need for *impression*, the face as a recording device, a surface on which events are written, which shows the *marks* of time. Rather, the lived face, which is marked by experience, the emotional reaction to events, which is an archive of the accumulated memories one has lived through, which some people claim to be able to 'read' for signs of character traits, gives way to the new beauty ideal in line with the goals of the cosmetic industry. This new facial ideal is an unmarked, uncluttered face. A face without marks, a face without memory traces, a face which ceases to work as a recording device, the *interface*, which was the entry point to the archive of lived experiences and memories.¹⁷ Botox, then, suggests that one mask of ageing has merely been replaced by another, amounting merely to another move in the game of masks.

One of the moves in the game of masks which cosmetic surgery provides is not to go for normalization, constructing a face like that of stars and celebrities which can be a potent ideal for some young people (Blum, 2007; see also Goodall, 1999, who describes the case of Cindy Jackson whose ideal was the Barbie Doll), nor to seek restoration of one's earlier face which the ravages of the ageing process have defaced, but rather to open up a new game. This is the strategy of Orlan, the celebrated French avant-garde body-artist, whose body and face became her artistic medium, with her live-feeds of operations, digitally altered photographs and videos, along with the phials of her operation blood and flesh, used to provide an exhibition ensemble. Orlan's project is to confront and transgress white Western notions of homogeneous beauty and the female body, by appropriating Judeo-Christian iconography mixed with elements drawn from many traditions (Ayers, 1999; Clarke, 1999).¹⁸ Like Lola Ferrari, the former soft porn star and television celebrity, who was noted for the biggest breast implants in the world

(Jones, 2008b), and who died in her 30s in the year 2000, it can be argued that Orlan has broken the rules of cosmetic surgery by passing through beauty into its opposite, the grotesque. Indeed, the grotesque body, hovers over the body beautiful, not just as its negative reverse image but as an unavoidable stage in the process of cosmetic surgery, when the body is cut open and the blood, flesh and gore revealed. This indicates the dark side of makeover culture, with disfigurement and death as possible outcomes.

The transgressions of Orlan and Lola Ferrari draw on the powerful traditions of bohemianism and artistic modernism to rewrite one's body as a work of art; not as a beautiful work of art, but rather the opposite, the disturbing carnivalesque grotesque body designed to shock and provoke. Their body surgery targets the growing tendencies towards normalization which cosmetic surgery offers as people demand a better-looking face, which generally means a more symmetrical face.¹⁹ In addition to Orlan's resistance to conventional notions of symmetrical beauty, some academics have also endeavoured to find a way beyond normalization. Ann Balsamo (1996), for example, asked for the scars of cosmetic surgery to be worn proudly, so that indications of life and experience are not eradicated; Kathryn Pauly Morgan (1991) has asked for a positive valorization of ugliness and ageing, suggesting that women could have cosmetic surgery not to eliminate signs of ageing, but to have them scored on the face and body – wrinkles scored on the face. Yet, as Meredith Jones (2008a: 28) argues, since these transgressive pleas were made, the upsurge of makeover television surgery programmes and general democratization of cosmetic surgery tends to render these moves increasingly redundant.

Cosmetic surgery and associated techniques promise 'aesthetic healing', a fantasy image of oneself freed from the visible signs of ageing and culturally inappropriate blemishes. It offers a normalized body in its before-and-after picture logic. Repair the body or face and then the self will be repaired (Covino, 2004). A more beautiful body or face will result in psychological well-being. Yet, this entails a particular view of the body, as bounded and compartmentalized into separate domains, each of which can be renovated or upgraded: a view which encourages people to judge their bodies in terms of social norms. Against this, it can be argued that bodies should also be seen as more processual, indeterminate and multiple. Bodies are not stable pre-formed entities, they are always extending beyond themselves and bodies can be seen as 'centres of indetermination' (Bergson, 2004). The need to address bodies as sites of expression and not just as anchor points for linguistic signification points to the difficulty people have in controlling the affective body, which threatens to disrupt the calculations of the positive effects on self-image through body maintenance and repair techniques.²⁰ One of

the problems is that the body is both assumed to be *cut off*, whole and bounded, yet at the same time as readily *cut open*, rearranged and repaired (Shildrick, 2008: 31). This not only leads to a normalization, a low tolerance of bodily differences (disability, gender and racial diversity) and impetus for surgical intervention to repair anomalies, or 'what we cruelly term ugliness' (Shildrick, 2008: 35). The problem is that the changes resulting from cosmetic surgery are simultaneously viewed as made at the behest of a subject, who looks down on the body as a canvas to be inscribed at will, and as entailing a change in the self, the production of a different person. Needless to say, there are many things that can go wrong with this doubled equation. There are also many problems which can follow from this abstracted conception of the bounded body and self, when both are pushed out into the everyday world, with its multiple affiliations and modes of expression and affect.

In contrast to the assumptions of television programmes, media publicity and advertising literature, cosmetic surgery may not result in being more happy with one's body. The increased expectations arising from surgery can lead to greater scrutiny of the body and face in the mirror and comparisons with others. As one cosmetic surgeon commented:

Plastic surgery sharpens your eyesight. You get something done, suddenly you're looking in the mirror every five minutes – at imperfections nobody else can see. (Bordo, 2003: xvii)²¹

Perhaps the problem follows from the scrutiny of the image in the mirror and the 'before-and-after' photographs. As Virginia Blum (2005: 61) remarks, the danger is that we identify with this two-dimensional image space and follow the fantasy that images can give us what we want and make us happy; as she puts it: 'It is the image itself with which we are infatuated, and whatever it pictures for us may in the end be irrelevant in the larger context of our general yearning for identification with the two-dimensional.' This contrasts with the image of the body of a person in love: here the gaze is not on the face in the mirror picking out the imperfections, rather the focus is on the eyes of the beloved, whose shining reflections provide the aura through which one sees oneself. In effect, one does not see with the eyes but *feel* with the eyes (Featherstone, 1998). Here the body gains a charge of affect which is not the cool surgical gaze measuring the body for cutting, but a seeing beyond, a seeing in motion, in process which points towards the body without image. Consumer culture, of course, extols this version of the body too, the dangerous body out of control, experiencing intensity and plenitude, the absorption of adventure, living the excitement of being on the edge, living beyond conventions. Yet while it is a strong theme in literature, music and film, and its intense moments are scattered throughout advertising, its dangers are recognized,

domesticated and circumscribed within the calculating hedonism of consumer culture. It is this capacity to look and not to look, or to switch between the two, which is an important feature of consumer culture.

Body without Image

It is generally assumed that consumer culture asks people to take an instrumental attitude towards their bodies, to scrutinize themselves for imperfections, to measure up to the ideal bodies presented in media advertising, the models, celebrities, and beautiful people of leisure (Featherstone, 1982). This view is often seen as congruent with the influential work of Anthony Giddens (1991), who refers to the high degree of reflexivity in 'late modernity', with actors investing in body projects in order to enhance their self-identity. This position has been criticized for its overemphasis upon the rational choice of actors who seek to control their bodies and as perpetuating both the subject-object split and body-mind dualism (Budgeon, 2003; Shilling and Mellor, 1996). For our purposes, what is interesting about this position is the assumption that people reflexively evaluate their bodies and appearance, and operate with a relatively accurate and coherent body image – in effect the body has been objectified and assessed as ready for transformation. These theoretical assumptions about the objectified body and governable self are very close to the ways in which consumer culture advertising and self-help transformational literature and advice columns present the body (Featherstone, 1982).

At the same time, the fact that we are surrounded by images of youth, fitness and beauty within consumer culture magazines, advertising, television and the urban landscape, does not mean that people necessarily believe or follow the self-improvement 'if you look good you feel good' logic. Appearance and body image are not always so easily objectified and subjected to the direction of the self. Shelly Budgeon (2003), for example, in research on young women in Britain, mentions that attitudes to cosmetic surgery suggest that altering the body was more about transforming the way the body was lived, not how it looked. There was a greater sense of the lived body as a process, with surgery enhancing the sense of agency, with the emphasis on 'doing' rather than 'looking'. This goes beyond the sense of 'me the subject' directing 'the body as object' (or project), or calculatingly adopting disciplinary technologies to enhance appearance. It points to a more ambivalent, less coherent sense of embodied self (Coleman, 2008).

The conception of the reflexive body as our seeing platform and, at the same time, as seen and judged by others, misses the ways in which the body in everyday life is lived in habitual ways and not constantly subjected to the instrumental

gaze of the consumer culture technicians. Nigel Thrift (2000: 360), for example, has drawn attention to the non-cognitive dimensions of embodiment and suggests that: 'Probably 95 percent of embodied thought is non-cognitive, yet probably 95 percent of academic thought has concentrated on the cognitive dimension of the conscious "I"' (cf. Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 13). Much of human life is lived in a non-cognitive world in which the body cannot be reduced to a body image, an individual unitary or organic body, the surface for society to fill with signs (Gill, 1998; Thrift, 2000: 39). Nor should this be taken to suggest that we only focus on the body in the phenomenological attitude, as a lived space to inscribe signs and meanings. Rather as Gill (1998: 126) remarks, we need to understand that:

... the space of the body is in itself diversified. There is no sole space, but multiple spaces; no sole relation, but a multiplicity of relations. In the same way, if it is necessary to speak of modelling the space of the body, it is useful to understand it as putting a continuous space into a certain form; for example, beginning with a diversity of discontinuous spaces. The body 'lives' in space, but not like a sphere with a closed continuous surface. On the contrary, its movements, limbs, and organs determine that it has singular relations with things in space, relations that are individually integrated for the decoder. (Gill, 1998: 126-7)

The body can be objectified, but it is not merely an object nor a 'subject-object', it is not a thing with a fixed or determined image. It is not just something occupying a single seamless space, but engages in movements through a diversity of discontinuous spaces.²²

This suggests that we need to take into account the body in movement, involved in a complex set of relations to the spaces around it. Not just operating as an object of which we have a clear image. Within consumer culture, the latter is in many ways the prevalent body image, based upon the body as object: a static image, in which the movement and unfolding of the body are captured as in a still photograph. This well-formed image is akin to the photographic 'proof' of one's body image and correlated self-identity that is made available within consumer culture advertising and publicity for the success of 'makeovers' and 'shapeovers'. This objectively achieved effect is very much in line with the emphasis upon vision to the exclusion of other senses: we are what we look like, and physical appearance is everything. This first type can be related to Massumi's (2002) discussion of *mirror-vision*, which relates to seeing oneself as others see one and entails seeing various frozen poses of one's self. Massumi contrasts this with a second type, *movement-vision*. Here there is not a generalizing subject, a self-identical observer who recognizes the object as the same. Rather the subject-object symmetry of mirror-vision is broken and there is the space of movement, of dislocated perspectives and transformation. Massumi sees this accumulation of

relative perspectives as involving the transformation of subject–object relations, giving rise to *the body without an image*.

This is not just a non-linear form of vision, but something which enlists other bodily senses and sensibilities, such as the registering of ‘muscular’ memory, or bodily pressure (proprioception). While in *mirror-vision* the eyes tend not to register movement, but rather interrupt movement to produce formed images, Massumi (2002: 59) argues that ‘movement-vision is sight turned proprioceptive’. Here vision acts as a mixed mode of perception, which registers both form and movement. When the body without image encounters an interruption, an event, it registers this via the additional visceral sensibility (interoception), the immediacy of a ‘gut feeling’, which precedes our sense of sight or sound to register *intensity*. The ‘unit’ resulting from this coupling together of the visceral and proprioceptive sensibilities, Massumi (2002: 61) tells us, is ‘an *affect*: the ability to affect and openness to be affected’.

It has been argued that we are currently witnessing a ‘turn to affect’ in cultural theory, which points to the discontinuity of the subject’s conscious experience and the role of the non-intentionality of emotion and affect, which has returned the body to the agenda in ways which go beyond constructionism (Clough, 2007). The turn to affect coincides with a challenge to the notion of the body-as-organism organized for reproduction which was common in the late 19th-century ‘work society’. Today bodies are conceived, as we find in the work of Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan, no longer in terms of a single unity but more in terms of a multiplicity (Cohen, 2008). At the same time the potential of what a body can do has been expanded through the development of new media information technology to produce genetic material, and with it the biomediated body. Biomedia point to the expansion of the informational substratum of bodily matter and the introduction of a ‘postbiological threshold’ into life itself (Clough, 2008). Biomedia results in a technical reconditioning of the body, providing a body that is informational (the body in the database), but also productive in the sense that it gives rise to a body which is post-biological in its capacity to mutate and be reconstituted as reformed matter (Thacker, 2004). Capital can now reproduce from within life itself, via information, or life as information, with the labouring body as the prime source of value giving way to the informationalized body as the source of generative life.

Massumi (2002) argues that the turn to affect is about opening the body to indeterminacy and focusing on the excess of affect which operates ‘beneath’ consciousness. This means that we can distinguish the intensity of an image, its affective potential, from its content. In his book Massumi gives examples of this, one being a discussion of research into the ways in which children reacted to

different versions of a film, one with words and one without. From this analysis he points to '*the primacy of the affective* in image reception' (2002: 24). Massumi goes on to argue that the affective is central to the analysis of our information- and image-based capitalist society, and emphasizes – contra Frederic Jameson – that 'belief may have waned for many, but not affect. If anything, our condition is characterized by a surfeit of it' (2002: 27). A second example is that of Ronald Reagan, whose stream of gaffs and *faux pas* were glossed over by

... the seductive fluency of his body image. ... His means were affective. Once again: affective as opposed to emotional. This is not about empathy or emotive identification, or any form of identification for that matter. Reagan politicized the power of mime. That power is in interruption. A mime decomposes movement, cuts its continuity into a potentially infinite series of submovements punctuated by jerks. (Massumi, 2002: 40)

Massumi (2002: 41) remarks on the way in which Reagan's verbal incoherence in the register of meaning, that 'he was a communicative jerk', was compensated for by his mime gestures and the timbre of his 'beautiful vibratory voice', which resonated to provide an 'asignifying intensity that doubled his every actual move and phrase'. Reagan transmitted vitality and projected an overweening feeling of confidence ('confidence is the apotheosis of affective capture'). Reagan exemplified the talent of the actor: *self-affectation*, a 'term which should be understood in the double sense of the artificial construction of a self and of the suffusing of that self with affect' (Massumi, 2002: 63). He delivers the body without image, based on degrees of intensity which is an affect, 'an ability to affect and a susceptibility to be affected' (Massumi, 2002: 61).

It is not the content of the image, what Reagan says, which is important, but the way he says it. The intensity of the affect he produces affects us in ways which undercut the sovereignty of the perceiving eye and the content of the spoken words. It is in the movement of the image, which reduces the surveillance subject-object vision to the 'tactile eye' (Taussig, 1991), the eye subordinating and working with the range of proprioceptive 'fleshy' senses and memories. An image culture and the new information technologies offer greater possibilities for these affective intensities to be experienced. In terms of the earlier discussion of body image, we rarely today sit and look at a body image in the sense of the 'mirror-image', the circumscribed still photograph; nor necessarily do we develop a self-image based upon this ideal and the 'cutting scalpel eye' of the consumer culture body maintenance and transformation professionals, whose gaze assesses and marks the re-fashionable potential of our bodies. This points to the complex graded reactions we have towards images and the necessary generative structures we need in order to move between the different registers of reacting to, perceiving and being affected by body images.

It further suggests that we also need to think through the ways in which images work in information technologies, such as digital video, which take us away from the mimetic quality of analogue images as we find in cinematic photography and film. It is not just that today there is greater potential to manipulate images in the way Bordo (2003) suggests, to the extent we rarely now see an image in advertising and magazines which has not been digitally enhanced to make the face and body seem even more beautiful and perfect – something which she argues profoundly affects our standard of judgement about bodies, the way we look at real people and the sense of inadequacy many people feel. This is still the mirror-image. Rather, we need to consider the ways in which the new media technologies themselves reveal the centrality of affect in the process of perception and also enable viewers to become accustomed to seeing and enjoying a new register of affect previously undetected in the flow of facial and bodily movements.

With the development of digitalization in new media, Mark Hansen (2004a) argues that we need to rethink the image as informational. It has become a process, which needs the affectivity of the human body to shape its indeterminacy. For Hansen, it is the body's capacity for affect, to move us, which helps us select perceptions from the world. Speaking of this transfer of affective power *from* the image to the body, he remarks:

Instead of a static dimension or element intrinsic to the image, affectivity thereby becomes the very medium of interface with the image. What this means is that affectivity actualizes the potential of the image at the same time as it virtualizes the body: the crucial element is neither image nor body alone, but the dynamical interface between them ... if we can allow the computer to impact our embodied affectivity directly, our communication and our coevolution with the computer – and along with it visual culture more generally – will enter a truly new, 'post-imagistic' phase. (2003: 208)

Hansen emphasizes that this means we no longer live in a culture of already articulated images:

Rather, Bergson's 'universe of images' has given way to a *universe of information*, and the pre-established analogical connection between the body (which Bergson has defined as a privileged image among images) and the material domain has given way to a radical heterogeneity. Bluntly put, the processes governing embodied life in the contemporary infosphere are disjunctive from those governing digital information. Accordingly, in our effort to reconfigure visual culture for the information age, we must take stock of the supplementary sensorimotor dimension of embodied life that this heterogeneity makes necessary. Since there is no preformed analogy between embodiment and information, the bodily response to information – that is to say, affectivity – must step in to forge a *supplementary* one. In order for us to experience digital information, we must filter it through our embodied being, in the process transforming it from heterogeneous data flux into information units – images – that have meaning for us to the precise extent that they catalyze our affective response. (2003: 225)

Affect, then, for Hansen is a key part of the process of engagement with digital information. In the way new media work through affectivity to bring into play other senses than the visual – what have been referred to as haptic or ‘multi-sensory media’ (Clough, 2008; Marks, 2002). But Hansen’s (2004b) intention is also to examine the ways which digital media, especially in the artworks of video-artists like Bill Viola, can reveal the micro-stages of affect which occur in between emotional states. In artworks such as *Anima* (2000) Viola has three monitors showing the passage from the four primary emotions of joy, sorrow, anger and fear on the faces of two women and a man. But the images’ sequence, which originally lasted around one minute in recorded time, has been slowed down to 81 minutes in playback time, to reveal the rich texture of the emotional transitions which are normally imperceptible. Viola shows the capacity of new media to provide a technical expansion of self-affectation, an over-abundance of affective information normally unavailable to perception, to reveal a more intense experience of subjectivity (Hansen, 2004b: 589). Hansen (2004b: 591) also discusses Douglas Gordon’s artwork *24 Hour Psycho*, which seeks to excavate the space between images in the movie *Psycho* by slowing down the projection speed to two frames a second instead of 24, to reveal the crucial role of the body in the dynamics of affective anticipation. Gordon argues that the video generation provides a shift in the material basis of perception and the way in which images are lived. In contrast to cinema time, video time is the time of slow-motion, freeze-framing and repetition, which act as ‘instruments of desire’. He comments: ‘with the arrival of the VCR’, we live in a ‘different film culture, a replay culture and a slow-motion take on things’ (Hansen, 2004b: 591).

Hansen’s discussion resonates with the work of Maurizio Lazzarato’s (2007) discussion of the inventive potential of video. Lazzarato argues that video has the capacity to affect the brain without necessarily passing through explicit forms of representation and is an interface between affect and cognition which makes the philosophy of intuition obsolete. This is because video has the capacity to open up perception in the manner Gordon discusses above – delaying, accelerating, contracting – to enable the translation of fluxes inaccessible to human perception into images. Video can be seen as opening up the preindividual affect to permit access to a new aesthetic dimension. Building on the work of Debord on the society of the spectacle, but seeking to go beyond it in his desire to explore not just the manipulative but inventive potential of the video-image, Lazzarato emphasizes that images are no longer seen as representative, but genetically constitutive of the world. Video art is seen by Lazzarato as offering up not just new aesthetic perceptions, but also the prototype for new institutions which are designed not just for the invention of new affective commodities (via branding etc.), but the invention of new worlds (see Toscano, 2007).

Concluding Remarks

The discussion of the body image does not sit easily with that of the body without image. It has been the intention of this article to make an initial attempt to bring them together. It should be clear that there is no argument here for a historical transition from one to the other, or a replacement. At the same time, it is evident that new media and information technologies have the potential to alter the range of habitual perceptive and affective structures which operate in everyday life. Indeed, the same could be said for the still photograph portrait and the emergence of a previous 'new medium', the cinema in the early decades of the 20th century, with the moving image and the 'close-up'. As we have discussed in the previous section, the new information technologies, digitalization and the video-image provided the opportunity to re-theorize the role of affect and the body in relation to the image.

What the discussion of the movement-image does do is problematize the logics at work within consumer culture marketing and the promotional view of the body – in particular, the over-simplistic logic that assumes that transformative techniques such as slimming, cosmetic surgery, etc. will result in a more positive and acceptable body image. Of course the new body, face and clothes may cause people to look at the person in a new way. But something beneath this may be retained: to continue to shine through, or provide a lack of presence. As the example of Ronald Reagan discussed by Massumi shows, there is something more in the movement body, the body without image, which communicates through proprioceptive senses and intensities of affect, which can override, or rewrite, gains in other areas. It could well be that the old truism 'it's not the clothes that you wear, but the way you wear them' operates. Many of the stylists and image consultants of course know this, but it is the hardest part of an image to reform. This is not to say that the body without image implies the absence of image; Reagan clearly had an image, but the image works on a number of levels and it is the communication of confidence, the intensities of affect that were powerful. We need more research to understand the ways in which the affective image works, and how people move between different registers, between the mirror-image and the movement-image, between affect and emotion, between the subject-object and the sensation of visceral and proprioceptive intensities, between the body image and the body without image.

Notes

1. This article was written in an attempt to rethink some of the themes addressed in 'The Body in Consumer Culture', which first appeared in *Theory, Culture & Society* (Featherstone, 1982). This article also draws on 'Body Image/Body without Image' (Featherstone, 2006), which starts to think

the consumer body image through affect. I would like to thank Couze Venn and the three anonymous *Body & Society* referees for helpful comments on an earlier version.

2. The critique of the use of such inflated terminology and the attributions of a logic to history (e.g. cultural logic) has been one of the targets in my writings since the 1980s and has been central to the discussion of postmodernism in *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (Featherstone, 2007).

3. The alleged 'affective turn' draws on the work of Spinoza, Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari, Damasio, Massumi and others (see Blackman, 2008; Buchanan, 1997; Clough, 2007, 2008; Damasio, 1994, 1999, 2003; Hansen, 2004a; Hemmings, 2005; Papoulias and Callard, 2010 [this issue]; Shouse, 2005). The affective turn points towards a less cognitive analysis of the body and the move away from the Cartesian mind-body dualism, along with the separation of reason and the emotions. It seeks to move away from a regulative model of the body, based upon the subjugation and control of the emotions, to notions of 'the power of affects', and 'reason-induced emotion' (Damasio, 2004: 11). There are implications here for the ontology of being and theory of life, with a more central role for affect in knowledge formation in all disciplines.

4. The discussions of the potential of new media, and the critiques of the dominance of ocularcentrism in Western modernity, suggest the need to find a way beyond the centrality of vision within consumer culture. Boothroyd (2009), for example, takes up the potential of haptic media and the importance of touch, which is central to personal and intimate relations. He asks for an ethics of touch and the development of new haptic *tele-contact* in the future, which could replace *tele-vision* (see discussion in Featherstone, 2009). There are important implications here for the ageing process, bodily impairment, the stigmatization of the elderly, the mask of ageing and beauty – themes which are taken up in Featherstone (forthcoming).

5. For a discussion of some of the meanings of image in connection to images of ageing see Featherstone and Hepworth (1991, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2005), Featherstone and Wernick (1995) and Hepworth and Featherstone (1982).

6. Photographic portraits, in both their setting and metaphysical assumptions about capturing the 'soul or essence' of the sitter, draw on the European tradition of portrait painting. Peter Burke (2009) has cautioned that the portrait should not be seen as solely a product of Western culture (e.g. the Italian Renaissance). Portraits were painted from early times in China. Similar physiognomic assumptions about the revelations of the 'readable' face also existed in China, albeit housed in a different metaphysics.

7. Photographs with celebrity or star endorsements were used in late 19th-century advertising. Lily Langtry was one of the first, endorsing Pears soap in 1882 and being feted in the USA as the most beautiful woman in the world, with her photographs appearing in many places in the 1900s (Peiss, 1998; Schweitzer, 2003). 'Picture personalities' and the cinema star system emerged in the United States around 1910 (see de Cordova, 1991). Actresses, beauties and early cinema stars, along with sportsmen, also featured on cigarette cards from the 1880s onwards. Many were photographs. These small items could be conveniently carried around and periodically gazed at. The 1900s also saw a transition in advertising, from the use of rational choice arguments to greater emotional appeal (see Leach, 1993; Lears, 1994, 1998).

8. For a discussion of the ways in which particular ageing women who became media stars maintain an affective presence, which works alongside and independently of their physical appearance and beauty, see the discussions of Marlene Dietrich, Marguerite Duras (Kaplan, 1999) and Carol Channing (Basting, 1999) and other pieces in Woodward (1999).

9. See discussion of Alger by Christopher Lasch (1979), who contrasts the self-made man ethic (in England typified by Samuel Smiles' doctrine of *Self Help*) with the late 20th-century narcissistic personality, over-concerned with appearance and celebrity. Dale Carnegie is often seen as the model of the typical hard-working thrifty anti-hedonistic Protestant Scotsman. Yet while he extolled the virtues of character, he also saw the importance of presentational skills in his bestselling *How to Win*

Friends and Influence People. The book is not about the benefits of the transformation of physical appearance; rather, one wins in life through the transformation of the inner impulse and animus that galvanizes the self to actively engage and take an interest in others, and it is this energy that shines through and influences.

10. The youth, fitness and beauty imagery is still expanding globally. It is hard to find an over-weight supermodel, the vast majority are tall, super-thin and under 25. There are of course ethnic variations: black, South American, African and Asian models are included now, but the sense of style and presentation are very much inflections from a Western base. There is also a process of the globalization of Asian fashion (Niessen, 2003), and many aspects of consumer culture have been well-established in Japan and other parts of East Asia since the early decades of the 20th century (Kim, 2003; Tamari, 2006). Cosmetic products for 'whitening' the skin, along with surgery which enables minorities to more readily pass (Gilman, 2001), have been common in the United States as part of what Sullivan (2001: 66) has referred to as 'the Anglo-Saxonization' of minorities. Similar products for whitening and realizing the standards of Western beautification have been established in Asia. The current phase of economic growth in China has led to a fascination with consumer culture glamour and beautification, plus 'extreme makeover' style publicity – even a 'Miss Plastic Surgery' Pageant in Beijing in October 2004.

11. Ironically, the fit taut muscular body is not the only type women find attractive. Monaghan's (2005: 91) study of gym body-builders depicts bulked up 'chubby' types as sexually attractive to women. This contrasts with his earlier study (Monaghan, 1999), in which he recounts the story of some of the men who spent considerable time working out to bulk up their muscles and were dismayed to find that women laughed scornfully at them when they paraded their overdeveloped bodies on the beach. These contrasting cases provide a wry comment on the contemporary equation of fitness, sexiness and attractiveness with the slim youthful ideal and the current castigation of obesity (Berlant, 2007; Campos, 2006; Crossley, 2004; Gard and Wright, 2005).

12. According to the American Association for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery since 1997 there has been a 162 percent increase in the number of cosmetic procedures (both surgical and non-surgical), with 10 million procedures being carried out in 2008, with 92 percent of the total made up by women. The 2008 total 10 million showed a 12 percent decrease from the 2007 figure; perhaps a limit has been reached, or, it is linked to the subprime mortgage crisis and economic recession, leading to rising unemployment and loss of purchasing power for ordinary people in the United States. See <http://www.surgery.org/sites/default/files/2008QFacts.pdf>. In Britain according to the British Association for Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, 34,100 procedures were carried out in 2008, a 5 percent increase from 2007, and a 300 percent increase on the 2003 figure; women made up just under 90 percent of the procedures.

13. In 2007, some 57 percent of all television programmes in the United States, and 69 percent of worldwide programming, were reality TV programmes (Wegenstein, 2007). In addition, the expansion of satellite and cable television has increased the number of channels and range of programmes on body maintenance, cosmetics, homemaking and lifestyle advice, which have a large female audience.

14. Shows such as *Ten Years Younger* and *Extreme Makeover* invariably provide success stories, but cover a small slice of the participants' lives, as the 'before-and-after' sequence is usually a matter of weeks or months. The endings are invariably happy with the transformed one basking in the 'reveal', a sort of 'coming of age' party with family and friends. Yet there are also the failures, as in the case of 30-year-old Deleese Williams from Texas, who attracted headlines in the United States by suing the producers of *Extreme Makeover* in September 2005. The anticipated 'transformation of her life and destiny' she was told to expect by the programme producers, went horribly wrong and resulted in a family tragedy.

15. Botox treatment is becoming globalized and is now in the UK. In the midst of reworking this article I received a handbill though the letterbox extolling the virtues of Botox treatment offered by a local day clinic, with a detailed price list of the treatment types and how long each would last.

16. Botox is commonly used in the film and media industries, where actors require a face capable of conveying the full range of expressions. But Botox can give a frozen look to the face and create difficulties in rendering certain types of non-verbal emotions, especially anger. Directors such as Martin Scorsese and Baz Luhrmann are against the use of Botox in movies; the latter comments, 'their faces really can't move properly' (cited in Cooke, 2008: 28). In effect they cease to 'look like themselves'.

17. Botox offers the ageing person the elimination of one of the stigmatizing signs of the ageing process: facial wrinkles. But the reconstructed face carries with it a new set of problems as it cannot adequately convey expressions, making it unable to reveal the memory traces of lived experiences, the archive of one's past life. Norbert Elias (1987) has referred to the way in which the face has a complex muscular structure enabling it to act as a signalling board to convey affect and emotions, something which Bill Viola's artwork *Anima*, which slows down the affect thresholds via videos of the human face, clearly shows (see discussion of Hansen later in this article). The impairment of the signalling board is made more complex with Botox because of the short life of the treatment, with new injections needed every six months as the paralysis wears off and the muscles break free. There is also the danger of 'muscular recruitment', the appearance of secondary lines as the face attempts to use different muscular pathways to work around the paralysed muscles. New, inappropriate lines can therefore appear in unexpected places (Cooke, 2008).

18. Orlan has been engaged in aesthetic surgery body art since the 1980s, with operations to remodel her face, such as her infamous Mona Lisa cheek implants and 'Dionysian' horns insertions. Some of her hybridized digital morphed images are highly challenging – especially the one where she has the slope of her nose altered to resemble the large parrot beak-like nose of the Aztec King Wapacal. This image was used on the cover of the *Theory, Culture & Society* Book Series reprint of the *Body & Society* Body Modification Special Issue (Featherstone, 1999). Although Orlan has worn a prosthetic King Wapacal nose, she has not had an operation to install it, nor does she appear to be contemplating it. Orlan is now over 60 and it will be interesting to monitor her exploration of 'deep old age' masking (Featherstone and Hepworth, 1991).

19. Computer scientists in Israel developed a software program, based on the responses of 68 men and women aged 25 to 40 from Israel and Germany who viewed photographs of white male and female faces and picked the most attractive ones. Scientists took the data and constructed an algorithm involving 234 measurements between facial features, including the distances between lips and chin, the forehead and the eyes, or between the eyes. Essentially, they trained a computer to determine for each individual face, the most attractive set of distances and then choose the ideal closest to the original face. Changes were made only to the geometry of the faces; unlike the digital retouching done for fashion magazines, wrinkles were not smoothed and hair colour was not changed. This and other studies suggest that there is surprising agreement about what makes a face attractive. Symmetry is at the core, along with youthfulness; clarity or smoothness of skin; and vivid colour, say, in the eyes and hair. There seems to be little dissent among people of different cultures, ethnicities, races, ages and gender (Kershaw, 2008).

20. This was not always the case, with the 'leakiness' of bodies, their openness to the world and treatments (bleeding, scalding, leeches, scarification) contrasting with the normatively regulated and bounded anatomical body which emerged in the 18th century with the advent of surgery (Doyle, 2008; Shildrick, 2008).

21. It is this aspect, the health problems and pain from body modification surgery which goes wrong, plus the impossibility of women being able to follow standards of beauty produced to please men, that feminist critics have latched on to. Breast enlargement via implants can be traced back to the 19th century (Gilman, 2001). Sheila Jeffreys (2005: 155) suggests that the origins of the silicone injections used to make large-breasted Las Vegas style showgirls was in the postwar US occupation of Japan. US servicemen found local Japanese women too small breasted, so their demand was catered for by providing Japanese prostitutes with silicone implants.

22. In the Western tradition we are accustomed to think we 'have a body', that it is our own piece of property. For a discussion of the ways that the person became legally linked to the body in England in relation to the emergence of the Habeas Corpus Act of 1679, see Cohen (2008). Cohen (2008) contrasts this sense of being/having a body with the Okanagan tribe in British Columbia, whose sense of the body was 'the land-dreaming capacity', the body as a capacity or set of potentialities, not a possession we have, but rather as embracing 'the great gift of our existence' we receive for a limited time.

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